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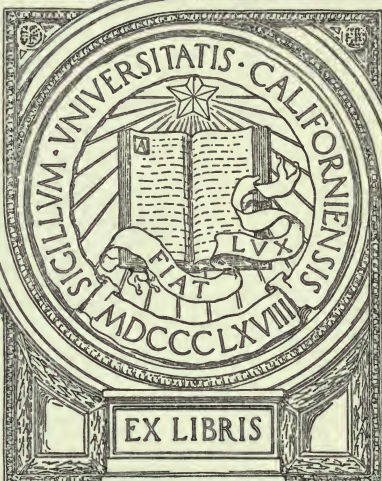


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Progress
of
Journalism





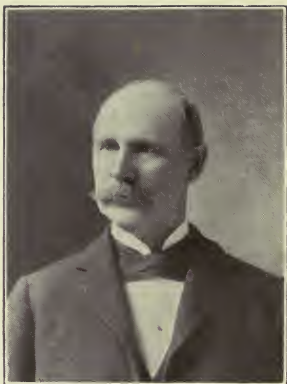
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1885



THOMAS REES.

Progress of Journalism

Annual Address

of the

Illinois Press Association

by

Thomas Rees

of the Illinois State Register, Springfield

+

Chicago, February 19, 1902

Addenda:

The Pioneers of Illinois

The Old Subscriber



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That strictly American machine—wonderful in its simplicity, graceful in its every line, quiet in its movements, powerful in its performance.—Page 21.

TO THE
MANUFACTURER

Early History.

In endeavoring to write the early history of the newspaper business, it is somewhat difficult to tell where to commence, for besides the uncertainty of the time when the first publications were made, it is likewise difficult to determine when those early publications could really be classed as newspapers, or even periodicals.

In the latter days of the Roman empire, a daily paper was prepared for official uses, but that could hardly be termed a newspaper. A similar sort of a paper was prepared, perhaps not so regularly, at Venice. Nuremburg seems to have had some sort of a paper as early as 1457 and various publications were made at different places and at different times in Germany and Italy, and perhaps in other countries. At the beginning of the 17th century, or about 150 years after the invention of mov-

able types, newspapers began to be regularly published in Germany, England and France, but editorial comment or the editorial column was introduced about a hundred years later.

The introduction of the editorial brought with it trouble and woe to the early editors. Daniel De Foe was pilloried and many editors in England and other European countries were imprisoned; some had their ears cut off as a mark of warning and disgrace and objectionable editions of newspapers were burned before the people by the public hangman. But right must prevail, and, thanks to those heroes, it has prevailed in the newspaper business.

John Campbell, of Boston, is given the credit of having established the first newspaper in America in the year 1704, and had a complete monopoly of the newspaper business of America for fifteen years, at which time he had swelled the circulation to a claim of 300 subscribers. In 1719 an opposition paper was started by Wm. Brooker and an editorial war broke out which en-

gaged all the editors in America at that time. This war seems to be still on with no prospect of a finish. When the war of the Revolution commenced, there were published in all the colonies combined something less than forty newspapers and some of them had very interesting experiences as the war progressed.

The Nineteenth Century.

At the opening of the nineteenth century about 200 papers were published in the United States, and the century was remarkable for the increase—not only in regard to the number of publications—but in the enlargement and improvement in all branches. In 1850 the number of newspapers had increased to 2,500 and the century closed with a grand total of 20,000, which number has been added to since.

Heroic Journalism.

The period in American history embracing the first six decades of the nineteenth century might be termed the heroic age in journalism and there

were giants in those days. Within this time the great Northwest Territory was added to the United States, the war of 1812, the Black Hawk war, the war with Mexico, the annexation of Texas and California had taken place and the agitation of the slavery question had culminated in a degree of heat that was soon to burst the bonds of the Union assunder. It was such times as try men's souls and it produced a group of journalists, the like of which I fear we may never see again. It is true even before that we had Franklin and a few other prominent newspapermen, but now came a time when all or nearly all men in the profession became great, and after a lapse of half a century many of their names are more familiar than the editors of the same papers at the present day. Among the more illustrious were Horace Greeley, of the New York Tribune, William Cullen Bryant, of the New York Evening Post, James Gordon Bennett, of the New York Herald, Thurlow Weed, of the Albany Journal, Geo. D.

Prentice, of the Louisville Journal, Samuel Bowles, of the Springfield Republican, Francis P. Blair, of the Washington Globe, Horace J. Raymond, of the New York Times, Wilbur F. Storey, of the Chicago Times, Joseph Medill, of the Chicago Tribune, Chas. W. Knapp, of the St. Louis Republican, Simeon Francis, who established the Illinois State Journal, William Walters, who established the Illinois State Register, and a host of others, some of whom have been or are now members of this Association, although the most of them have joined the majority on the other side.

Elijah P. Lovejoy.

In the great galaxy of editorial stars let us not overlook the one whose name stands at the head of the long illustrious list, who owned and published a paper of such infinitely small proportions as compared with other great and greater journals that I doubt whether there is one of a thousand today who could tell the name of that paper, and

yet whose editor was a man of such honesty of purpose, such determination in the line of principle, was so courageous and unfaltering in the carrying out of his convictions that his life and his death have been an incentive to all editors of all places for nearly three-quarters of a century and will be as long as newspapers are published and the lamp of liberty continues to burn. I refer to Elijah P. Lovejoy, of the Alton Observer, who gave his life willingly to what he knew to be the right. Innumerable were the times his life had been threatened, three times had his office and his presses been destroyed. With full warning of the fate awaiting him, he proceeded the fourth time to replace his office, knowing neither fear nor dismay he met his death like a hero, a martyr to the cause of liberty. Lovejoy died, but he died as a brave man and not as a coward, but after all be it remembered that even in death the brave man has an advantage, for "a coward dies a thousand times before his time; the

brave man dies but once." Lovejoy died, but the cause in which he worked—the cause of freedom—never dies; others continued the work where Lovejoy left off and his grandest anticipations were more than realized when Abraham Lincoln issued his emancipation proclamation and the shackling chains fell from the limbs of four million slaves. Lincoln, the martyr, completed the work in which Lovejoy, the martyr, was engaged and the people of this nation have reared massive monuments to Abraham Lincoln and the people of this state, after nearly three-quarters of a century from the time of his death, erected to the memory of the martyr Lovejoy a stately monument in the city where he fell, and set forth on enduring tablets of stone his immortal words, "As long as I am an American citizen, and as long as American blood flows in these veins, I shall hold myself at liberty to speak, to write, to publish whatever I please on any subject. I can die at my post, but I cannot desert it."

Popular Intelligence.

The great increase in the population of the United States of course was the greatest factor in the increasing of the circulation of newspapers, but the improvement in the public school system and the general spread of popular education, with the high price of books at that time, had by the middle of the century made a nation hungering and thirsting for knowledge, or at least for reading matter. The breaking out of the civil war about the time of the introduction of the telegraph gave the newspaper business an impetus which has carried it on to the high road of success. Since that time the number of papers established and the growth of the business from a commercial standpoint has been simply phenomenal and to the making of papers there seems to be no end. It appears there is or has been no village so small but there was a want for a paper that could be met at least with the auxiliary sheet and no town or city that had papers already but what appeared to

some one to need more, and so we have, as before stated, the grand total of 20,000 or more papers at the present time.

Big and Little Papers.

Yes, popular intelligence has demanded lots of papers and they have come in response to that demand and it seems that there is room for all. They are like the stars of the heavens—a few big ones and a whole lot of little ones—but if they were not for a purpose they would not be there. Look up at the heavens. Can you count the stars? No. Are they crowded? No. There is room for all, and each one, we are told, is a world. So with newspapers. There may seem to be a great many of them, more than you can count and more little ones than big ones, but each has its use in the firmament of journalism and each is a world within itself. The astronomers tell us of stars of the first and second magnitude and of planets and satellites; so there may be newspapers of the first and second magnitude and planets and

satellites, but no one seems to encroach upon the field of the other. So, to the man who has a little paper, I would say, be not discouraged; fill your field with your little paper to the best of your ability until you can take possession of a bigger paper in a bigger field, even as you may hope to finally leave this world for a better and bigger one to come. 'Tis true you may have big papers to contend with, but after all they are only operated by men. In every battle there are big guns and heavy artillery, but for every cannon there are a thousand muskets and it is usually the men with the muskets that win the battles. The artillery may shake the earth and fill the heavens with sound and smoke, sink big ships and demolish heavy fortifications, but after all they are only fired by men, and the man behind the gun is just the same man whether he is behind a cannon or behind a musket, and if the musket is aimed straight and hits a vital place it will hurt your friend, the enemy on the other side, just as fatally

as though he were struck by a cannon ball. So I would say to the man with the little paper as I would say to the man with the little gun—keep up the fight and never cease firing until you conquer, and do not become alarmed or beat a retreat because you happen to see a man with a cannon or because you chance to hear one go off.

The Editor Overwhelmed.

It is unfortunate in the greatness of the great papers that the editor has been overwhelmed. The editorial pages of such papers have become too extensive for any one man to handle, so they must be edited by a number of men, and as there should be a consistency in the editorial tone, individualism has been superseded by unity. The editorial page has become a reflex of the combined opinions of the members of the corporation which controls the publication. And this is a lamentable feature of the metropolitan journals of today. The loss of individualism in

any enterprise is to be regretted, and no matter how large the circulation of a paper may be, no matter how many pages are printed each day or how many readers a newspaper may have, it can never become a great paper editorially unless it has one responsible editor who knows the people and whom the people know. I make this statement believing that it will be generally conceded, the New York World had more editorial influence with 20,000 circulation with Manton Marble as its editor, than it now has with half a million circulation and a score of editors whose identity never reaches beyond the pay roll Saturday night. And practically the same could be said of the New York Tribune, the New York Times, the Post, the Herald, the Sun, and of every daily paper published in the city of Chicago today. And here is where the country editor must be looked to for the perpetuity of the honor of the newspaper profession. The country with its pure air produces not only all that which sustains men, but

it likewise produces men, and it broadens mankind in general, while the cities, the congested centers of population, burn and consume. The atmosphere in the cities is not healthy, either from a moral or physical standpoint, and the rural districts must be looked to to furnish the physical and moral stamina of the nation and the country editors must finally be depended upon to formulate and control the editorial morale of the newspapers of America.

The Metropolitan Papers.

By the foregoing remarks it must not be inferred that I would rob the metropolitan papers of the honor which properly belongs to them. I would not if I could and I could not if I so desired. There is much good in them. There is nothing that can destroy them and their destruction, if it comes at all, will come from themselves, should they drop from the high plane which they now occupy to the lower plane of journalism. As before intimated, they are

to the fraternity of journalism what the artillery is to the army, or what the 60-ton guns are to the navy. While they are usually published by corporations they are frequently controlled by one man and the man who owns or controls an immense metropolitan newspaper is a greater man than the general of an army or even the ruler of a considerable nation. To be the commanding spirit in the center of a whirl of activity, operating a journalistic machine so immense that each revolution shakes the earth, an institution that gathers all the news from every quarter of the habitable globe and even beyond the habitable parts thereof, and scatters the same to the uttermost parts of the earth again; that exchanges the news of the world for the news of the world; an institution that controls as it were the center of a huge hour glass into which all the sands of all the news of all the earth do run, and out of which all the sands of all the news of all the earth do flow again, is too grand a position to contemplate with-

out admiration. To occupy such a position with a golden stream of approval flowing in from every direction to be expended in gathering news and doing good. To be able to send men into every city, village and hamlet; to be able to hire ships to scour the oceans; to be able to send caravans into the darkest parts of the uncivilized continents; to engage men to dig and delve into the crypts of prehistoric antiquity and bring forth the hidden treasures of knowledge of peoples long dead and forgotten; to send ships and men to search for the solution of the mysteries of the frozen zones; to erect monuments for deserving heroes and to establish homes for old men and women whose latter days are being trodden beneath the feet of a rushing, unthinking and uncharitable world; and finally to be able to succor and take from the streets the little waifs and lost and forgotten pearls of which our Saviour said, "Suffer them to come unto me, and forbid them not." To occupy such a position, to be

able to do such work, is a privilege granted to but few men on this earth. Such a position is worth striving for and the nearer one may reach it the better the opportunity may be for doing good.

Mechanical Progress.

The mechanical appliances used in connection with the publication of newspapers would indicate a close partnership between the people who have made the papers and the people who have made the machinery used in their production. And while it seems to the publishers that the machine builders have secured the most of the profits of the partnership, the fact must not be overlooked that the publishers have also done fairly well; be that as it may, the two classes have worked hand in hand. It is said that necessity is the mother of invention and this is particularly true in this case, as the newspapers of the present day could not be issued as they are save for the men of great inventive

genius who have constructed such wonderful machinery as is used in the business at the present time; and such machines would be utterly useless had the business of newspaper making failed in the wonderful development it has reached.

Previous to the year 1800 all printing was done on various kinds of screw presses, among which is the "Old Ramage." Franklin used such a press in his day. The hand press was introduced about the beginning of the nineteenth century and after several patterns of hand presses had been turned out, the greatest perfection was reached when Samuel Rust invented the Washington hand press in 1827.

The Washington Hand Press.

That strictly American machine. It was the press of Lovejoy and the heroic editors of his day who came with the vanguard of homeseekers and homemakers that moved westward with the star of empire and blazed the way of freedom from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Those sturdy pioneers

“Who crossed the prairies as of old
Our fathers crossed the sea,
To make the West as they the East
The homestead of the free.”

It has been used in all countries and in all climes and has never been entirely superseded by any other invention and there are more in use now than ever. It is used to-day by all the leading engraving houses for the taking of the finest proofs of the most delicate engravings, and it is also used for printing the papers that come from the farthest frontier countries. It is a most remarkable machine, wonderful in its simplicity, graceful in its every line, quiet in its movements and powerful in its performance, combining the lever and the fulcrum of which Archimedes said, “Give me the fulcrum and with the lever I will move the world,” and it has moved the world.

Following the hand press came the single cylinder, the two cylinder, then the four, six, eight and even the ten cylinder presses, but all these were too slow for the modern newspapers, and

as early as 1865 William Bullock, of Philadelphia, invented the press bearing his name and printing from a continuous web of paper. This press was made possible by the invention of stereotyping from paper moulds, allowing curved plates to fit small cylinders. All the fast presses of the present day are built on the principles introduced by Mr. Bullock, the presses turning out a hundred thousand copies per hour, being practically eight presses of the same pattern in one. Bullock never lived to see the wonderful success of his style of presses, for in erecting the second press he was caught in the machinery and died as the result of the accident.

Other Helps.

Then came the ubiquitous reporter, the stenographer and the typewriting machine, the telephone, electricity and even the despised kodak that has become so essential in illustrating journalism.

When the Spanish fleet sailed out of

Santiago harbor and the great guns of the United States navy poured out their tons of shell and shot that wrought such death and havoc among the enemy's boats, making the Caribbean sea a seething lake of hell, the kodak was being used, and it faithfully conveyed the scenes of battle and the intense expressions on the faces of the participants therein from that far away distance to the United States where, through the process of electric light and photo-engraving, they were portrayed on the white surface of American newspapers. Yes, and besides all else they showed Commander Schley in the thickest of the fight.

The excellence of the products of American type foundry has done much to improve American papers. But the last of labor-saving inventions to aid in the production of newspapers were the various type-setting machines. The Mergenthaler has taken the lead, a machine composed of about 5,000 separate and distinct pieces of metal, but all connected and working so harmo-

niously that the machine seems to be a living being responsive to the lightest touch.

Already had come the telegraphic press associations that cover the earth and collect the news from all places, using thousands of miles of leased telegraph wires to bring it to the various newspaper offices, then the fast mail trains, the rural routes to aid in the distribution of papers, and who can tell what may come next?

The Present.

Standing today and looking back within the memory of some of the older here, we find some contrasts as compared with the days when they took up the newspaper business. A half century ago there were very few machine presses in Illinois, and they were in the larger cities, now they are to be found in hundreds of towns. The greatest offices then would not compare with scores of offices now in the smaller country towns. In those days editors were supposed to be a set of well meaning fellows who were toler-

ated and had to be supported in a community. Now the newspaper men of this state will compare favorably with the most intelligent and prosperous classes and they are a component and leading part in every community in which they reside. In those days the printing office was up some back stairs over some general store, hard to find and uninviting when found. Today many of the newspapers in this state own their own business houses, which are ornate and substantial and rival the bank buildings in the cities or towns where they are located. The editor is both a professional and business man and is looked upon as such.

The papers, magazines and periodicals of today are works of art, more magnificent than was imagined as belonging to the realm of journalism in those days and the newspaperman of today has the confidence of the public to a very large degree.

But while these favorable contrasts are the rule, I am sorry to say there are many exceptions. There are some

editors who do not honor their profession. There are some publishers who are not impressed with the advantage of well arranged and well printed papers, and whose offices or shops are a disgrace to well regulated society. There are printing offices where dirt and disorder is the rule and from which emanate papers slovenly printed and disreputably edited. There are editors and printers who have not aroused themselves to grasp this golden age of possibilities in the newspaper business, when every man who embraces it should be a leader among men and set an example illustrating that everything that is done at all is worth doing well.

It is such organizations as this, the Illinois Press Association, that are to educate such men to advance with the onward march of time, to induce such men to distinguish the difference between the printing press and a road scraper, between the muckrake and the pen, and avail themselves of the magnificent opportunities they should and do possess, and while this association

has done much along that line there is yet much to be done, and may God speed the work.

Opportunities.

My friends, have you ever stopped to seriously consider the opportunities of journalism? While, if possible, it would be better that all persons who engage in the newspaper business should come fully educated and equipped, it is not absolutely necessary. The making of newspapers is a trade where no apprenticeship is required, a profession that does not call for a diploma. It is an open field and a free contest in which any one of any age or class may enter. And those who have started in the race apparently the least equipped with education or training have sometimes passed and surpassed those who at first had far greater advantages. But poor equipment does not always insure success, neither does the best preliminary training. Editors have become famous who stepped from the graduating class of a college into the editorial room.

Others under the same conditions have been ignominious failures, while others who have "rolled behind the press" or have made their start sweeping out the office have met with equal success and just as dismal failures. But journalism offers all a chance and the success or the failure is within themselves. To enter the profession of law, medicine, theology, pedagogics, requires many years of faithful preparation, and even to shoe a horse one must serve an apprenticeship. But the newspaper office is a workshop and a college within itself and the beginner can take hold where he will and work up to such positions as have been occupied by George William Childs, of the Philadelphia Ledger, Chas. A. Dana, of the New York Sun, William Loyd Garrison, of the Boston Liberator, Samuel I. Prime, of the New York Observer, Henry W. Grady, of the Atlanta Constitution, John Clark Ridpath, the entertaining historian, Joseph McCullagh, of the Globe Democrat, or our own revered Mrs. Bradwell, of the Chi-

cago Legal News, and myriads of others who have joined the majority. Or he may claim such positions as are now occupied by Henry Watterson, of the Louisville Courier-Journal, James R. McLean, of the Cincinnati Enquirer, W. J. Bryan, of the Nebraska Commoner, Senator Hawley, of the Hartford Courant, and the army of newspaper makers who now keep the world awake.

Graduates.

Perchance one entering the newspaper business may pass through its various stages and finally graduate and have his name enrolled in the alumni. And there he will find himself classed with such men as John G. Whittier, who edited a paper in Boston and was one of America's most renowned poets; Wendell Phillips, the hero of liberty; Henry Ward Beecher, the world's greatest divine; James G. Blaine, statesman and candidate for president; John Hay, author, ambassador, and secretary of state; Charles Emery Smith, postmaster general;

William M. Springer, who represented the capital district of Illinois in congress for twenty years; Geo. W. Peck, who became governor of Wisconsin; Henry M. Stanley, who gave us the secrets of interior Africa; Samuel M. Clemens, who, as "Mark Twain," has given the world its greatest fund of humorous literature; Robert J. Burdette, who has filled the world with sunshine; James Whitcomb Riley, who with poetic words has played on responsive chords in the hearts of every one who believes in the common people; Eugene Field, whose "Little Boy Blue waits for the touch of a vanished hand," and the long list of inspiring names, so many that the reading of the same would tax your endurance.

Of the Future.

In looking over the field, it would appear on first glance that the possibilities of the newspaper business have been reached; and yet I predict that the remarkable progress of the past and the healthy condition of the

present are but an index to further improvement in the future. The conditions of life and living are improving all over the world, not only in the most civilized portions, but in the darkest places as well. Railroads are being built, telegraph lines are being extended, electric car lines are bringing the metropolis and the farm so close together that it is but a step from the green fields of the country to the busy centers of trade, and the telephone has brought all parts of the world within speaking distance. Schools are improving, the rural mail service will reach the door of every farmer, the products of labor will be more nearly equalized, there will be less work and more time for recreation and mind improvement, and the newspapers, which always have led, will continue to lead. They will be better edited, better printed, will enjoy better modes of distribution, will have more reading matter and more readers; they will scatter gems of literature and thought and will dis-

cuss the questions that will come with a higher mode of living.

Every man who is engaged in the newspaper business should realize the responsibilities that rest upon him. He should be proud of the position he occupies and should do his part, as God has given him the opportunity, in the upbuilding of his profession and the uplifting of mankind.

For the profession of journalism or the trade of newspaper making, whichever you may call it, is the grandest work in which anyone can engage. It is the one trade or the one profession that brings a person into close touch with the balance of mankind, that leaves him free and independent, unhampered and unenthralled to champion the cause of the weak and the oppressed and to follow the dictates of his own conscience in the battle for right at all times.

It is not in all places as it is in the United States, for several nations which enjoy a considerable degree of intelligence and large measures of lib-

erty have not yet risen to that high state of governmental perfection that permits free religious worship, free speech, and a free press. Upon these magnificent principles the United States, this young republic, was established but a trifle over one hundred years ago and since that time it has taken its place as the greatest of all nations, whether of the historic past or of the strenuous present. It has developed a constellation of newspapers wonderful beyond the conception of man, surpassing in class, quality, enterprise and independence all the papers of all the world. Each and every one is as a blazing torch that illumines the night of prejudice and error, and in the course of time they will make a new and brighter day to encircle the globe. A day—yes, more than a day; an age—a cycle of ages, of light, freedom and liberty that will lift the race of men to a moral elevation nigh unto the gods.

Addenda.

The Pioneers of Illinois.

[Written for the Old Settlers' Society of Sangamon County.]

You have seen the past—the present—
With their sorrows and their joys;
And although you are old settlers now,
You once were girls and boys.

Oh, you gray-haired, honored pioneers,
What rogues you used to be
Along about the deep snow time,
Way back in thirty-three.

And you, our dear old mothers,
You've changed a heap since then;
For the years that number one by one
Change women more than men.

But we think we almost see you,
With your smiles and with your curls,
When you captivated these old boys,
You giddy, giddy girls.

How you watched at evening sunset
Down the long and narrow lane,
How you listened, how you waited,
For you knew he'd come again;

And when you saw him coming,
As shy as any mouse,
For fear he'd think you anxious
You slipped back in the house.

How you loved; how you quarreled;
How you broke up in a row;
But, then, you always made it up
Just the same as we do now.

And then there was a wedding,
'Twas the happiest day of life,
When the boy became a husband,
The girl became a wife.

Little angels came to live with you,
Little angels without wings,
And you toiled and struggled for them
Oh! the precious little things.

Little loved ones, how you loved them,
How you watched them day by day,
And they called you Father, Mother,
And you taught them how to pray.

Every sunshine has its shadow;
Every springtime brings its rain;
Every life must have its sorrow;
Every pleasure brings its pain.

And there came the winds of winter,
Came they with their chilling breath,
And two little hands were folded,
Folded in the sleep of death.

But there is a God above us
And the husband and the wife
Changed their hope from earth to heaven
Where there is eternal life.

* * * *

If there's any one I honor
'Bove all others in this land,
It's the grizzled, gray old pioneer
Like those around this stand;

You have been the bone and sinew,
You have worked with one accord,
You have made the state of Illinois
The garden of the Lord.

For, of all the lands we're told about
In the Bible or by sages,
It must be said that Illinois
Is the wonder of all ages.

There's the happy land of Canaan,
Of which we've heard so much,
With its flowing milk and honey,
Its warlike tribes and such;

As compared with Illinois,
It's a little one-horse land,
You couldn't find a farm there
Much bigger than your hand.

And Jerusalem, the ancient—
'Twas a great town in its way—
But 'twould hardly make a suburb
For Chicago of today.

And the temple that was built there—
Was it much after all?
Do you think that it was equal
To our own great capitol?

What were Sodom and Gomorrah,
That merited God's ire—
What was all of their destruction
To the great Chicago fire?

And who was Alexander,
That people called him great?
There's a dozen men his equal
That have grown up in our state.

Four million slaves in bondage,
Raised up their cry to God!
They prayed for their deliverance
From the slave oppressors' rod.

Why, then, laud the first Napoleon,
With his wars on land and sea?
Let us shout for old "Abe Lincoln,"
Who set these millions free.

He was one of you old settlers,
A real old pioneer,
But among the world's great heroes
He's in the upper tier.

There's another man—you loved him;
He was eloquent—defiant.
He lived right here in Springfield—
He was called the Little Giant.

When the spirit of rebellion
Thrilled the country through and through,
The question that absorbed the world
Was, what will Douglas do?

His party was forgotten,
The Union was his cause,
And the party followed Douglas
Amid the world's applause.

Then there was Grant, the tanner,
And our own brave boys he led,
Like a besom of destruction
Was their onward soldier tread.

They went with flags and banners,
They went with drum and song;
They went from Illinois
Three hundred thousand strong.

How they struck the southern army,
Like a cyclone in its wrath,
How that army fell before them,
And the dead filled up their path.

How they stood while shell and bullet
Came down like summer's rain,
With hope they left your fireside,
Did they all come back again?

No—but the war is over,
The dead are laid away,
And your daughters scatter roses
O'er the blue and o'er the gray.

The old settler is passing away—
He seems like one who walks alone
 Upon some old familiar shore—
And as he walks, he raises up his eyes
And sees, far out upon the ocean's crest,
 The outline of a ship that bears away.
He knows the ship is loaded with his friends—
The old companions of his early youth—
 And he is left behind.
And as it disappears
Its absence calls him to himself again;
He finds he is surrounded by his friends,
 The best of friends,
 The same of kin,
 The same of good impulse
 As those who sailed away.
These friends would fain pour out their love for him,
 And have him rest content
And, yet, withal, they are to him unknown
In love's essential part called sympathy;
 For they are of a younger generation.
And when he would unite with them,
And tug and toil as once he loved to do,
 He finds his youth,
 He finds his strength,
 His whole ambition gone,
And throwing down the burden that he bears,
 He lays him down to rest.

The Old Subscriber.

[Written for the Illinois Press Association, 1898.]

One day an old man and a boy' came in, the old man leaning on a crutch, observed:

"I reckon that you hardly know me here,
And yet I've read your paper many a year.

My name is Jones—

I live in Buckhart, near the Christian county line,
My father settled in the timber there in eighteen twenty-
nine,

And we have took your paper since it was first got out—
In thirty-five or thirty-six or somewhere there about.

It almost breaks my heart
To tell you we must part,
But I have come to stop 'er—the paper I'm a gettin'.

You ask me why—I hate to tell you,
For a man is sort of 'shamed if hap'nen to be poor,
Of lettin' people know that the wolf is at the door—
Not only at the door, but broke clean through with vim,
And glarin' eyes and nashin' teeth that's mighty nigh to him.

But that's my fix, and while I'm 'shamed to say it, it's the
truth,

And worse than all, I think I'm owin' more 'an I can pay;
I thought I'd come and tell you for to cut 'er off today—

I mean the paper I'm a gettin'.

Of course I'll miss the paper that's been comin' out so long,
Like we miss the birds in autumn when they cease their
summer's song.

But then my son, who always came and paid, he's dead—

He got mixed up with a fractious colt about the first of May,
He was trainin' of the creature when she broke and run
away.

He said, "It did't 'mount to much, a few bones broke that's
all"—

But he failed and still grew worser till he answered to the
call.

You know the girl he married wasn't like a farmer's wife—
And by two years she went afore to try the higher life—

She always seemed just like a tender flower.

The farm? I haven't owned it for a dozen years or so—
A fire and a mortgage, haint neither of 'em slow,
And then I lost my wife;

So me and little Jim, this lad you see—

Jim's boy, is all that's left below

To wait our time.

Yes, me and little Jim is all that's left—

We sort of fight together

And chink up all the holes to keep out winter weather,

And hold the wolves of poverty at bay.

But a man of eighty and with fallin' sight,

To make a battle isn't much,

Seein' as his only weapon is a crutch;

And as for Jim, he's only eight—

He can't do much at any rate.

There's one thing though that he can do,

He's got the sight—

And reads the paper to me every night,

And all the big words gets 'em right—

And that's what Jim can do.

But no more readin' now for Jim,
Except the books he brings from school with him—
For while a paper's what I call in fact a cryin' need,
If you haven't got the money you hain't no right to read;
We'll try and do without it—'tis a few years at the most
'Till I will join the army, the mighty moving host,
That marches never to return,
And Jim'll fight alone.

So cut 'er off and stop 'er now, and we'll do what we can
To pay you what we owe you, for we want to act the man.
But while we're workin' round to bring this thing about,
You'll have to wait awhile for to straighten it all out.

The old man ceased and with a withered hand brushed
back a falling tear.

* * *

Then the newspaper man said:

"My dear old friend, I'll tell you how to make this matter
straight,
We'll call it square—the year that's past and throw in
ninety-eight,
We'll throw in every year to come—we hope they'll not be
few,
That we can print a paper little Jim can read to you."

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